

PRESS RELEASE

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June 19, 2002

U.S. AMBASSADOR PARTICIPATES IN CONFERENCE ON THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

SANTO DOMINGO – The Ambassador of the United States, Hans H. Hertell, attended today Wednesday, June 19, a lunch-conference sponsored by the Institutionalism and Justice Foundation (FINJUS) on the “Management of the Ombudsman’s Office, Guarantee for the Democracy”. In pronounced words in the course of the event, the chief of United States diplomatic mission expressed that “the Ombudsman should turn into the people’s interlocutor for the faithful execution of his functions and duties in favor of the citizen. In other words, he should be a real defender of the people’s rights.

President Hipólito Mejía participated in the event and directed himself to those present to stress the role of the Ombudsman figure. In like manner, the event relied on the presence of the Defender of the Puerto Rico Inhabitants, Honorable Carlos López Nieves, who dictated a magisterial conference on the Ombudsman figure, his role and attributions.

In the course of the act a board of analysis, directed by the President of the Senate, Andrés Bautista and the President of the House of Representatives, Dr. Rafaela Alburquerque, took place. In his speech, Ambassador Hertell emphasized the need that the country has to rely on the process of transparent and rigorous selection of the first Ombudsman of the Dominican people, to ensure his professional and ethical quality and ensure the capability of the organization in carrying out its important function in benefit of the citizen’s rights.

This activity is surrounded inside the cooperation agreement that was signed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and FINJUS last month January. This program known as “Strengthening of a State of Right and Respect for Human Rights” has a fundamental objective to encourage the debate and analysis of the legal and institutional initiatives and of structural reforms, which have a purpose of making the administration efficient, effective and transparent.

The Ombudsman is a juridical figure of Swedish origin that looks to protect citizen towards any misuse of power in base of the faculties and attributions that has been given by the law based on its moral authority. Law 19-01, which creates the institution in the

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country, was promulgated February 1 2001. The duty of selection of the Ombudsman and his assistants and supplants, corresponds the National Congress. Its main attributions are the promotion and defense of the human rights for instance looking after the faithful execution of the functions and duties of the public administration in favor of the citizen.

Carlos Salcedo, Executive Director of FINJUS was in charge of the opening act. Members of the Directive Council of FINJUS also assisted, as also attended, representatives of the National Congress, international agencies, management organizations, professionals and non-governmental, representatives of religious organizations, directors of different Faculties of Right in the country and members of the press amongst others.